

## CLAIMS:

1. A printing apparatus using a consumable providing at least one of an image receiving tape, the consumable carrying a tag holding parameter information identifying the width of the tape and status information including the amount of tape remaining in the consumable, the printing apparatus comprising:
  - printing means for printing an image;
  - a tag reader arranged to receive said information from the tag via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves; and
  - a processor arranged to (i) receive said information and to control operation of the printing apparatus in dependence thereon including selecting a printing operation based on the identified width, and (ii) update the status information based on usage of the tape via the contactless link.
2. A printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said tag is an RF tag and the tag reader is an RF reader.
3. A printing apparatus according to any preceding claim, which comprises tape usage monitoring means for monitoring usage of the image receiving tape as images are printed.
4. A printing apparatus according to any preceding claim, which comprises a display adapted to display said status information and said parameter information.
5. A printing apparatus according to any preceding claim, which comprises a cutting system arranged to cut off a portion of the image receiving tape, said cutting system being controllable responsive to said parameter information.
6. In combination, a printing apparatus and a consumable providing image receiving tape having a tag holding parameter information identifying the width of the tape and status information including the amount of tape remaining in the consumable, the printing apparatus comprising:

printing means for printing an image;

a tag reader arranged to read said information from the tag on the consumable via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves; and

a processor arranged to (i) receive said information and to control operation of the printing apparatus in dependence thereon including selecting a printing operation based on the identified width, and (ii) update the status information based on usage of the tape via the contactless link.

7. A combination according to claim 6, wherein the consumable comprises a cassette holding a supply of image receiving tape.

8. A combination according to claim 6, wherein the consumable comprises a tape holder around which is wound a supply of image receiving tape.

9. A consumable providing an image receiving substrate which carries markings allowing tape usage to be monitored and carrying a tag holding status information identifying the length of image receiving tape remaining for receiving an image, the consumable having a transmitter for transmitting the information via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves, and a receiver for updating the status information.

10. A printing apparatus using a consumable providing an image receiving tape, the consumable carrying a tag holding parameter information identifying at least one template suitable for printing a label on the image receiving tape, the printing apparatus comprising:

printing means for printing an image;

a tag reader arranged to receive said template information from the tag via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves; and

a processor arranged to receive said template information and to control operation of the printing apparatus to print a label in accordance with said at least one template.

11. A consumable providing an image receiving tape and carrying a tag holding parameter information identifying at least one template for printing a label on the tape, the tag being arranged to transmit information via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves.

12. A printing apparatus using a consumable providing a thermal transfer material and carrying a tag holding parameter information identifying the nature of the thermal transfer material, the printing apparatus comprising:

printing means for printing an image;

rewind means for winding the thermal transfer material after use;

a tag reader arranged to receive said information from the tag via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves; and

a processor arranged to receive said parameter information and to control the torque value with which the rewind means rewinds the thermal transfer material in dependence on said information.

13. A consumable providing a thermal transfer material and carrying a tag holding parameter information identifying the nature of the material so as to control the torque value with which the material is wound up in a printer, the consumable having a transmitter for transmitting the information via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves.

14. A printing apparatus using a consumable providing a substrate carrying a plurality of preformed labels, the consumable carrying a tag holding information relating to the printable area of each of the predefined labels, the printing apparatus comprising:

printing means for printing an image;

a tag reader arranged to receive said information from the tag via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves; and

a processor arranged to receive said information and to control operation of the printing apparatus in dependence thereon.

15. A consumable providing a substrate carrying a plurality of preformed labels, the consumable having a tag holding information identifying the printable area of each preformed label and a transmitter for transmitting said information via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves.

16. A consumable according to claim 15, wherein the preformed labels are die-cut labels removably adhered to the substrate.

17. A consumable according to claim 15, which provides a self-laminated tape providing a plurality of non-transparent printable areas.

18. A printing apparatus using a consumable providing at least one of an image receiving substrate and a thermal transfer material, the consumable carrying a tag holding prestored messages relating to the consumable, the printing apparatus comprising:

printing means for printing an image;

a tag reader arranged to receive said prestored messages from the tag via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves;

and a display arranged to display said prestored messages.

19. A consumable providing at least one of an image receiving substrate and a thermal transfer material, the consumable carrying a tag holding prestored messages relating to the consumable and having a transmitter for transmitting said prestored messages via a contactless link in the form of electromagnetic waves, whereby said prestored messages can be displayed at a printing apparatus.

20. A consumable according to any of claims 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17 or 19, wherein the tag stores prestored messages for display at a printing apparatus.

21. A printing apparatus according to claim 10, which comprises a display, wherein the parameter information includes a list of templates displayable on the display whereby a user can select one of said templates for printing a label.
22. A consumable according to claim 20, wherein the prestored messages relate to the consumable.
23. A consumable according to claim 20, wherein the messages include dealer/sales contact information.
24. A consumable according to claim 20, wherein the messages are selected from one of advertisements, application suggestions and other user oriented messages.
25. A consumable according to claim 9, wherein the tag stores prestored messages including a message to notify a user to order more tape when there is insufficient length of image receiving tape remaining for a printing operation.
26. A consumable according to claim 16, wherein the principle area is defined by width and height information.
27. A consumable according to claim 13, wherein the parameter information identifies the nature of the material.